



OFFICE OF
THE DIRECTOR

UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY
WASHINGTON

File

October 23, 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. McGeorge Bundy
The White House

We plan to send two daily reports on foreign reaction to the Cuba crisis. One report closes at 8:00 a.m. and will be delivered about 9:30 a.m. The other report closes at 3:30 p.m. and will be delivered at 5:00 p.m.

Attached is the first report.

Donald M. Wilson
Donald M. Wilson
Acting Director

Attachment

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OVERNIGHT FOREIGN REACTION TO THE PRESIDENT'S CUBA SPEECH

(As of 8 a.m., October 23, 1962)

SUMMARY

Early and sketchy reaction to the Cuba Quarantine announcement was generally favorable in the Free World. Newspapers and official spokesmen, particularly in Latin America, praised the President's strong stand.

Reservations were expressed in the British press, and most of the maritime powers of Western Europe had not disclosed an official position.

The Soviet Union has not announced a policy line at this time. Pravda continued to comment on "alarming news" claiming "Washington is hatching another adventure." The first Soviet mention of the Cuba speech was on a broadcast in English to the United Kingdom at 7 a.m. A summary account tied the Cuba situation to Berlin, stating that "some people think military demonstrations should be undertaken in West Berlin."

Previous experience indicates the foreign press will not take a particular position on a question of this nature until editors are aware of the attitudes of their respective governments.

LATIN AMERICA

USIS in Rio DeJaneiro reports extremely great interest and extensive coverage of the President's speech. No Brazilian government position was disclosed.

Mexican President Lopez Mateos said in a Manila press conference yesterday that Mexico would consider the possession of aggressive arms by Cuba a menace to security and peace and that Mexico would change its attitude toward Cuba if Cuba is arming with warlike intentions.

In Argentina a government informant said his nation would back the United States proposal to the OAS Council.

Costa Rica and Nicaragua expressed all-out support for the U.S. position.

Panama City broadcast an editorial calling the speech "a well-planned answer" to International Communism's insatiable greed for swallowing countries.

WESTERN EUROPE

The British press, which was generally against a shipping quarantine yesterday, was mildly critical and hedging after the speech. Editors want more proof of missile bases.

The Manchester Guardian suggests that Soviet action may be taken to counter American bases in Turkey. The paper believes that in the end the U.S. may find "it has done its cause little good."

The Express was the only paper to give full endorsement to the President's action. The Daily Telegraph says at first sight the partial blockade seems "greatly mistimed."

West German reaction was favorable. A Bonn spokesman said the government "welcomes the determination of the U. S. government to meet dangers arising from the situation." Die Welt of Hamburg said "America demonstrates the time of being pushed around has passed. This applies not only to Cuba. It applies also to Berlin."

The French press complained that we didn't consult France and other Allies, and the views were generally unfavorable. Some papers accuse the President of playing domestic politics.

Figaro and L'Aurore were favorable. Figaro (conservative) said, "Any weakness in the face of Soviet activities in Cuba would soon have been taken as evidence of greater weakness in Berlin."

L'Aurore (Rightist) said it is "up to Khrushchev to keep mankind from opting for bilateral annihilation over Cuba."

SOVIET BLOC

As previously mentioned, Moscow reaction has been quite general. TASS to Europe carried a factual resume of the speech this morning with one line of comment: "It abounded with crude anti-Soviet attacks."

Kiev broadcast a French Press Agency report locally.

In the satellites the U.S. was charged with aggression by Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland and East Germany.

Prague's official Communist paper mentioned the speech and called "Kennedy's move an act of force and a war measure which culminates a campaign of aggression against Revolutionary Cuba."

A Sofia broadcast called the quarantine an "unceremonious attempt to choke Cuba" and "a potential danger to world peace."

FAR EAST

The Free China press commented favorably.

The China News at Taipei endorsed the action and said that "if the Russians want a nuclear war, they will have it" whether or not there is a blockade. The paper added the Russians should "quietly leave Cuba."

Truth Daily at Hong Kong said the quarantine "stamps Cuba as a belligerent."

The Manila Daily Mirror printed a factual account of the speech and took no editorial position. It called Cuba a threat.

Australian Prime Minister Menzies said: "We commend the President's statement."

MIDDLE EAST

Cairo newspapers carried such headlines as "America Prepares to Attack Cuba," "Kennedy Imposes Naval Blockade on Cuba," "40 American Naval Ships Blockade Cuba," "World Facing Critical Situation, Threatens Gravest Dangers," "American President Threatens Retaliation Against Russia."

CUBA

Castro will speak today.

Havana radio and television denied Cuba has rockets. Broadcasts through the night claimed that everyone was calm and also urged the people to be calm.